



The Florida House of Representatives

Chris Sprowls
Speaker

NEWS RELEASE

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Florida House Closes Out 60-Day Session with Historic Wins for Floridians

From the Largest Expansion of School Choice in the Nation to Florida's First Flooding & Sea-Level Rise Plan, the Florida House Took Long-Term Action on Key Issues During 123rd Regular Session

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (April 30, 2021) — Today, Speaker of the Florida House Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor, marked the end of the end of the 2021 Regular Session of the Legislature by heralding the Chamber's historic achievements in meeting the challenges of today and preparing Florida for the future.

"Over the last 60 days, the Florida House seized opportunities, took risks, and transformed Floridians' lives," said Speaker Sprowls. "I asked our Members and their staff to meet the challenges of today, and I could not be more proud of the results."

"Together, the House not only prepared Florida for the next year; we prepared Florida for the next decade. We were able to address the long-term needs of the state with significant legislation to respond and prepare Florida for the next pandemic, to expand school choice in an unmatched manner nationwide, to change the way people get jobs in Florida forever, to ensure that every Florida child can read on grade level by 2030, to protect our communities and our families, and to respond to the threat of sea level rise with the most robust flood mitigation plan in the nation."

"I want to recognize the most exceptional leadership team and the Members who worked together to achieve historic wins for Floridians. I also want to thank Senate President Wilton Simpson for being an invaluable partner, as well as Governor Ron DeSantis for his ideas and

support. Thank you to the people of Florida for entrusting us as their representatives. God bless the Members of the Florida House and God bless the Great State of Florida.”

At the start of the 2021 Legislative Session, the Speaker challenged the body to address several pressing long-term issues, and the Members delivered. The following bills championed by Speaker Sprowls have now either been signed into law by Governor DeSantis or await his signature:

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

“I expect much of the Session will be spent dealing with the fall out of the virus and modernizing our laws and plans to ensure we are prepared for future pandemics.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **SB 72 (HB 7 and HB 7005)**, by Representatives Lawrence McClure and Colleen Burton, protects businesses, schools, nonprofits, religious organizations and health care providers that are following COVID protocols from frivolous lawsuits; (Signed into law on March 29)
- **HB 9**, by Representative Ardian Zika, protects Floridians from vaccine-related scams and increases the penalties for pandemic-related fraud;
- **SB 1892 (HB 1595)**, by Representative Jayer Williamson, creates Florida’s first ever Emergency Preparedness & Response Fund to make state resources available in case of an emergency;
- **SB 2006 (HB 7047)**, by Representative Tom Leek, requires the development of a public health emergency plan to ensure that Florida is prepared for every foreseeable public health emergency; and
- **HB 1463**, by Representative Chip LaMarca, reorganizes the Department of Economic Opportunity for increased efficiency and upgrades the CONNECT system to a cloud-based system to protect it from an outage caused by a surge in users.

Overhauling Florida’s Education & Career Help System

“We need to be the first state in the country to insist that workforce programs meet actual outcome standards. We need to create an Opportunity Hub integrating all of our workforce programs into one unified system.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **HB 1507**, known as the Reimagining Education & Workforce (REACH) Act, by Representatives Clay Yarborough and Lauren Melo, the single-largest statewide workforce revamp that will tear down barriers to success and create a worker-centric, accountable system to help students, workers and job seekers begin and advance in their careers; and
- **HB 1261**, by Representatives Jackie Toledo, David Smith and Patt Maney, expands access to institutions of higher education to military veterans, to students of grandparents who are Florida residents and state university students who enroll in program linked to high-demand jobs and in critical workforce programs.

Unleashing Entrepreneurship in Florida

“My challenge to this House is to develop an Entrepreneurship Agenda that knocks down the barriers holding back all those untapped job creators.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **HB 663**, by Representatives Michelle Salzman and Adam Botana, increases opportunities for cottage industries in home-based business by increasing the sales limit and allowing for mail delivery rather than only in person.
- **HB 403**, by Representative Mike Giallombardo, removes barriers for home-based businesses by allowing them to operate in a residential zone.
- **HB 735**, by Representative Joe Harding, preempts local occupational licenses barricading meaningful self-employment;
- **HB 667**, by Representative Jim Mooney, modernizes building inspections by allowing inspection requests to be submitted electronically and inspections to be conducted virtually;
- **HB 1059**, by Representative Will Robinson, removes barriers to the construction permit process by allowing building permits to be submitted electronically; and
- **HB 1239**, by Representative Josie Tomkow, expands broadband internet service to underserved areas.

Promoting the Truth About Patriotism

“I would love for every school-age child to be able to hear from Floridians – Americans – who hail from countries in Latin America or other parts of the world where freedom is a luxury and liberty a dream.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **HB 5**, “Portraits in Patriotism,” by Representative Ardian Zika, allows Florida students to hear directly from victims of Communism and share their stories on America’s exceptionalism.

Transforming Education for Florida’s Students

“We know from our experience with school choice that when we engage parents in their child's education, we see dramatic improvements, especially among low-income and minority communities.” - Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **HB 419**, by Representative Erin Grall, brings accountability to voluntary Pre-K providers; and
- **HB 7045**, by Representative Randy Fine, provides the largest expansion of school choice in the nation.

Opening New Worlds of Reading

“I am asking all of you to join me in launching our New Worlds Initiative, where the State of Florida will partner with private donors to put books in the homes of every struggling reader or low-income child from grades kindergarten through five.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **HB 3**, by Representative Dana Trabulsy, establishes Florida’s first-ever statewide delivery of free books to kids and support materials for parents; and
- **HB 7011**, by Representative Vance Aloupis, puts tools in place to ensure that the Speaker’s ambitious goal to get every child reading on grade level by 2030 is achievable.

Protecting the Environment and Preparing Florida

“We need to bring the same long-range planning and strategic discipline to our environmental programs that we bring to our transportation work plan.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **SB 1954 (HB 7019)**, “Always Ready,” by Representative Demi Busatta Cabrera, is the most ambitious plan in the nation to mitigate impacts of flooding and sea level rise; and
- **HJR 1377**, by Representative Linda Chaney, is a constitutional amendment that will give Floridians a property tax break for flood mitigation improvements.

Ensuring Healthy Families

“I have been looking at the data on the disparities that black women face in maternal health care ... Every baby should have the opportunity to be born healthy.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

“We should encourage adoption and provide greater support for foster kids as they transition to adulthood.” – Speaker-Designate Sprowls, September 17, 2019

- **SB 2518**, sponsored by Representative Bryan Avila and championed by Representative Kamia Brown, extends post-partum maternal health care Medicaid coverage eligibility from two months to a full year;
- **SB 80 (HB 1473)**, by Representative Demi Busatta Cabrera, supports youth by better preparing them for adulthood and providing support to older foster youth who age out of care;
- **SB 96 (HB 7039)**, by Representative Thad Altman, protects child victims of abuse and sexual abuse by updating reporting requirements and data collection;

Protecting our Communities

“For any Members who want to have an honest, thoughtful, fact-based conversation about how we can improve policing in Florida, my door and my mind are open.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

“If we cannot control the Twitter mob, then we can at least ensure that no Floridian is placed at risk of violence from an actual mob.” – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **HB 1**, by Representative Juan Fernandez-Barquin, creates one of the strongest anti-mob violence laws in the country to protect peaceful protests and law enforcement (Signed into law on April 19); and

- **HB 7051**, by Representatives Cord Byrd and Fentrice Driskell, building policing confidence in Florida's communities by codifying best practices.

Keeping Florida Safe

"My concern is making sure that tax dollars benefit the residents of Florida and not some other country. And at this point, I'm not convinced that simply disclosing those ties is sufficient. Universities have already demonstrated that, left to their own devices, they are not doing enough to protect our investment." – Speaker Sprowls, January 9, 2020

- **HB 7017**, by Representative Erin Grall, increases transparency in Florida's universities from foreign donations and persons;
- **HB 1523**, by Representative Mike Beltran, places guardrails to protect Florida's business from corporate theft and malfeasance; and
- **HB 921**, by Representative John Snyder, modernizes the crime of written threats by including electronic threats to kill, conduct a mass shooting, or commit an act of terrorism; and
- **HB 1297**, by Representatives Mike Giallombardo and Cord Byrd, upgrades standards for purchasing IT resources and ensures the integrity of agency data.

Creating Accountability Now

"We need to stop congratulating ourselves on how much we spend on a problem and start asking what we are getting for the money we spend." – Speaker Sprowls, Nov. 17, 2020

- **HB 1137**, by Representative Tom Fabricio, increases oversight of cabinet IT projects by lowering the threshold amount that triggers Florida Digital Service oversight;
- **HB 1103**, by Representative Randy Maggard, requires special districts to report the total tax dollars collected;
- **HB 1079**, by Representative Amber Mariano, improves contract oversight by creating continuing oversight teams to ensure state contracts are closely monitored;
- **HB 233**, by Representative Spencer Roach, requires annual assessment of intellectual diversity in Florida public higher education; and
- **HB 1157**, by Representative Traci Koster, creates price and identity transparency with freestanding emergency departments.

Offering Tax Relief for Floridians

"We believe taxes should be low and economic freedom high." – Speaker-designate Sprowls, Sept. 17, 2019

- **SB 50 (HB 15)**, by Representative Chuck Clemons, provides an historic 700% tax break and reduction of the commercial rent tax by over half for Florida businesses;
- **HB 7061**, by Representative Bobby Payne, creates a sales tax holiday (Freedom Week) from Thursday, July 1, through Wednesday, July 7, 2021, exempting certain purchases

for outdoor activities – such as boating, camping and outdoor sporting events; also includes back-to-school and disaster preparedness tax holidays.

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